

Maestro Dudamel Interview - 2008

David Corkhill (Principal Percussion):

He's terrifically exciting, he really means it, he's totally committed and he's totally passionate. He understands this music. He knows what it's about.

Michael Turner (Viola):

His sheer enthusiasm for the music is just astonishing.

David:

He's been preparing for this concert for a long time and we've seen it in the diary and we've been preparing for a long time as well. The spring has been coiled several months ago and as it gets closer it gets more and more compressed and at that first downbeat we do all the polite "a very warm welcome to Gustavo Dudamel etc." But then the first downbeat that spring is released.

Michael:

He's got that rare star quality and he has a very clear idea of what he wants and also an incredible musical intelligence. I think he's a phenomenon.

Gustavo Dudamel (in rehearsal):

Slow...oh but it's too piano the last note...[sings]

Dudamel (interview):

I love to be with the Philharmonia Orchestra because they are a great group of musicians. And also they have a beautiful soul. They are so open and we enjoy to make music. I'm very happy to be here.

Paul Edmund-Davies (Principal Flute):

You know sometimes you just wonder when is he going to stop! He's got Duracell Plus right the way through him. He has an incredible amount of energy but it's not just the energy, it's the enthusiasm as well. And that's very infectious.

David:

The Philharmonia Orchestra absolutely gives 100% for any conductor. Now, if we then get 150% back (which we do with him) then we give even more!

Dudamel (interview):

They're wonderful musicians and I love to give to the musicians a place where they can be free.

Dudamel (in rehearsal):

That's so beautiful the colour. Perfect but don't play the crescendo...[sings]...we try to have something like...[sings]. Maybe a little bit less pressure but a little bit more vibrato in the D flat...[sings]...OK, can we try 1st violins this beautiful line, Number 1.

Maya Iwabuchi (Leader):

It's kind of daunting having to play for him because he knows exactly what I'm going through and if I'm making a mistake and why. Any technical or musical deficiencies I might have as a violinist he would very well understand I'm sure.

Dudamel (in rehearsal):

Number 1, first violins...You know, this is the thing, it's not really a diminuendo. It's only to have more intensity but less sound...[sings]...and then we come back, Can we try bar 3 of 1, directly?

Michael:

It's always done from a point of view of real experience so that's great. And he's grown up through the system in Venezuela where he's had to learn the nuts and bolts of how orchestras work. So, for somebody of his age he's got a great grasp of what it is that's required from a conductor. I think he's one of us and we know he's after a great result and I think he's getting a great result.

Dudamel (in rehearsal):

The change to the A string, give a little bit more...[gestures using baton].

Maya (in rehearsal):

Right well then maybe let's just start on that bow. Sorry about that. I know that I know what you want. So can we just do that?

Dudamel (in rehearsal):

Yeh. We'll go up one time, let's try.....no, directly bar 3.

Dudamel (interview):

Yeh! You have to think about the music. You have to think about the complete world, the complete universe that is a symphony. Because details of course are important but even more important is the complete line, the complete vision.

David:

He's completely aware of the sound everyone is making in the entire orchestra. And in a sense he wants everyone at times to over blow and completely demolish whatever's around because of the history of the piece. He wants it to be terrifying; he wants it to be horrible. Not all art is beautiful and pretty. Some art is really repulsive and he wants this to be a real demonstration of the kinds of things that Shostakovich lived through.

Dudamel (in rehearsal):

Great! Let's have more sarcastic displays...[sings]. More band sound...[sings]. But it's not a band to celebrate it's to go to the [gestures a noose]. This accent that we have

there we change for a sforzato (sorry Shostakovich)...[sings]. The end of the phrase; Can we this more meno mosso, poco meno? Great. And it's this note; 5 after 27. Give it a little bit more there! So beautiful...a little but more ugly?

Dudamel (interview):

And always we have a beautiful connection. I think that from the beginning when I was in the academy and I was conducting and learning with Maestro Dohnányi and also with the musicians of the orchestra was so beautiful. It was immediately a beautiful connection.

Paul:

From previous experiences some conductors just literally conduct it through and let the music simply speak for it but he guides us through it and that's the big difference between a conductor who just wants a performance and someone who actually wants an event. It'll be very interesting to see what happens in the concerts but certainly he's got the orchestra in a very energy fuelled feeling.